

**PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
ROOM 208
MIDDLETOWN, CT**

Members Present: Councilman Carl R. Chisem
Councilman Thomas Serra
Councilman Gene Nocera
Councilman Sebastian Giuliano
Councilman Philip Pessina

Staff Present: William Russo, Director of Public Works
Christopher Holden, Deputy Director of Public Works

Others: Mike Harris, Energy Consultant, Clean Energy Task Force
Scott MacDonald, Middletown Resident
Rebecca McLaughlin, 35 Clover Street

Chair Chisem opened the Public Works & Facilities Commission meeting at 7:00 P.M. Chair Chisem requested a motion to approve the minutes dated April 13, 2016. Motion to approve the minutes was seconded and approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

None.

CORRESPONDENCE:

There was a discussion in regards to whether or not two topics should be added to the agenda or to the public comment section. Councilman Serra made a motion to waive the rules and add two items to the agenda per Director Russo's recommendation. As a result, item 5d: Winter Operations was added, as well as item 5e: City Hall Concrete Steps. Motion was seconded by Councilman Pessina and approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. LED Lighting on Main Street – Director Russo introduced Mike Harris as Energy Consultant, staff to the Clean Energy Task Force. Mike indicated that Main Street faces an ongoing issue with the need for better or more lighting. This issue has been brought up in many meetings of the past.

He stated that he named the Main Street LED streetlight conversion the "Pilot Project Phase Two," which involves thirty four poles on Main Street. These are thirty foot aluminum poles that illuminate the roadway, mainly on intersections. Phase one was LED conversions using the same technology on Church Street which has since received positive feedback.

The total cost for labor and material for phase two is about \$23,000.00 with an estimated 40% rebate from the utility . The net cost is brought down to just under \$14,000.00 for the conversion. It generates a savings of \$4,500.00 per year. After rebate, this is a three year pay back that generates an internal rate of return of about 35% over twenty years.

Director Russo stated that there is an issue with lighting at the crosswalk near the Salvation Army and the Main Street Fire Department. After checking the possibilities with Planning and Zoning, he would like to place a thirty foot aluminum pole in place of the decorative light which was taken down during a car accident this month. The new pole will have a twelve foot arm with the LED light installed. Since the occurrences of accidents happen so frequently, there will be an extra aluminum pole purchased to keep in storage.

Councilman Pessina asked the commission if new poles will be installed along Main Street or if the existing poles will have the new LED lights installed. Director Russo stated that the existing thirty foot poles will be used.

Director Russo stated that there is a \$30,000.00 balance in the streetlight bond for fiscal year 2015-2016 according to Diana Doyle, Deputy Director of Finance. However, the Main Street LED lighting will be brought to the Finance and Government Commission even though there is already a grant in place. He does not believe that the lighting will have to be brought to the Common Council, but will notify the commission if he hears otherwise.

A motion was made to approve of the LED lighting on Main Street. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

- b. Salafia Property Donation: Farm Hill Road – Director Russo stated that the Salafia family’s property borders Zoars Pond. They would like to donate that property to the City of Middletown as a part of an open space area at Zoars Pond. The land was inspected by Roger Palmer, Deputy Assistant Tax Assessor and Deputy Director Holden. It will go from this commission and then to Planning and Zoning. This donation does not require action from the Common Council; however, Director Russo stated that he will conduct an email to Brig Smith, General Counsel, for confirmation.

Deputy Director Holden stated that the property is about 1.38 acres and appraised at almost \$23,000.00. There have been no official environmental samples taken from the property; however there was nothing found that indicated any type of concern.

One of the councilmen made a motion to approve the Salafia property donation. Motion was seconded by Councilman Pessina and approved unanimously.

- c. Carp Fishing Tournament Waiver – Director Russo stated that our ordinances state that park openings are sunrise to sunset. Last year, the Public Works & Facilities allowed the Carp fishing tournament to stay overnight at Harbor Park without any issues. They are asking permission to stay in the park this year from Saturday afternoon May 21, 2016 through Saturday night and into Sunday morning, May 22, 2016. He is asking for the commission to allow them to waive the sunset closing just for the tournament. Director Russo stated that he ran it by public safety and they did not require any officer to work with them.

A motion was made to move approval for the carp fishing tournament waiver. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

- d. Winter Operations – A motion was made to waive the rules to let Scott MacDonald speak. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Scott briefed the commission with a historical background regarding his concerns with winter sand and salt use. He does not believe it is healthy for the environment nor that it is commendable for public safety reasons.

Scott stated that last year he was told that the Connecticut Department of Transportation (D.O.T.) was doing a study on winter road maintenance. This was required by state legislature due to the possible corrosive effect of salt on vehicles, bridges and roadways. The report indicated that they have moved from a de-icing strategy to an anti-icing strategy. The de-icing strategy states that you cannot treat the roads until the storm has been occurring for some time. The an anti-icing strategy is when a pre-wetting solution containing salt, sometimes enhanced with magnesium chloride, is put down on the roads before the storm starts or at the beginning of the storm. This prevents snow and ice from sticking to the roads for hours. The new study has shown improvement in road safety. The study has also proved to nearly eliminate the D.O.T.'s use of sand, providing both financial and environmental benefits.

Overall, 34% more salt was used than before, but 56% less overall materials were used or needed. Salt only has to be dispersed once in the beginning of the storm and then once at the end of the storm. Scott stated that many municipalities use "ClearLane" as an anti-corrosive agent sold by Cargill, which is a non-organic solution. He also stated that sand is worse for the environment than straight salt.

Councilman Serra requested that this issue remain on the agenda. There are many conflicting aspects in the report that he would like to read thoroughly and make a decision about. The commission agreed to leave this item on the agenda for further discussion.

- e. City Hall Concrete Steps – Councilman Serra stated that he requested for this issue to be an item on the agenda. The front steps at City Hall are falling apart which is also noticeable from the court house across the street. Director Russo agreed stating that the front patio is far beyond the need for repairs. About four years ago, he received a quote for front patio repairs in the amount of \$65,000.00. He has tried to put this project on a road bond but was told that it does not qualify as a road bond project.

Director Russo asked the commission how they want to go about the funding for the patio repairs. The commission discussed funding and agreed to ask for LOCIP money. The City has the ability to hire a mason as long as they agree to work at state rate.

Director Russo stated that he will have the Chief Management Analyst, Tina Gomes, email the state asking for LOCIP money for the improvements and repairs. The commission will be carbon copied in the email to see if it qualifies. If it does, it will be prepared and then endorsed by the Public Works & Facilities Commission to be sent to the Finance & Government Commission. After they approve of using the LOCIP money, it will then go to the Common Council for their approval.

Councilman Serra moved approval to use LOCIP money, if qualified, and to hire a mason at state rate. Motion was seconded by Councilman Pessina and approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. April 2016 Public Works Overtime Report – The commission reviewed their April 2016 Public Works Overtime Report. Director Russo stated that overtime is currently at a minimal, unless an emergency call through dispatch is received.
- b. April 2016 Building Permits – The commission reviewed their April 2016 Building Permits. Director Russo stated that he does not have the current numbers for the current building permit revenue, but indicated that \$550,000.00 was the projected amount for this fiscal year. However, \$603,000.00 was the figure given at the budget hearing a couple of weeks ago. A FedEx building will be coming to Middletown shortly, which will be about \$500,000.00 in permit fee revenue. Furthermore, Wesleyan University and Middlesex Hospital pull annual permits of large quantities during this time of year which will further increase the revenue.

OTHER:

- a. April 2016 Monthly Report – Highway Division – The commission reviewed their April 2016 monthly reports.
- b. April 2016 Overtime Report – Parks Division – At this time, there is no overtime report for April 2016 for the Parks Department. Director Russo stated that other than baseball, lacrosse and soccer, the Parks Division is not undergoing any large amounts of overtime.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

Rebecca McLaughlin, 35 Clover Street, stated her concerns with the non-existence of organic grass fields. Councilman Serra stated that if it is not stated in the ordinance, nothing can be done at this time. Director Russo stated that the commission has to abide by what the voters approved. The only way the language can be changed is if the voters become involved again.

As there was no further discussion, the Public Works & Facilities Commission meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.